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Letter dated 30 March 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith a copy of the address delivered by the Prime Minister of Côte d'Ivoire, Mr. Seydou Elimane Diarra, following the street demonstrations of 25 March 2004 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the address circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Philippe **Djangone-Bi**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 30 March 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Address by the Prime Minister, Mr. Seydou Elimane Diarra, to the nation following the demonstrations of 25 and 26 March 2004

Since 25 March 2004, our country, Côte d'Ivoire, has been going through another dark period of its history, marked by violent and bloody demonstrations which have resulted in many deaths, injuries and missing persons.

First and foremost, allow me to bow my head in deep and genuine sorrow in memory of all the victims.

From the very bottom of my heart, I share the profound pain and deep sorrow of the bereaved families and extend to them the heartfelt sorrow of the Government of National Reconciliation.

I sincerely wish those injured in the demonstrations a speedy recovery.

Despite all the efforts we have made, more behind the scenes than publicly, I note with regret that we have not been able to avert these dreadful incidents.

Yet, my dear countrymen and women, nothing justifies the flare up of violence of recent days, which I find particularly disturbing.

Indeed, let me recall that our national defence and security forces constitute a republican institution and carry the responsibility for ensuring the security and protection of people and property and the maintenance of law and order. It is unfortunate that their best efforts could not avert this tragedy.

No other form of informal, parallel organization will be tolerated. I wish to assure all of you that these extremely grave incidents, which undermine all the national and international efforts towards a speedy return to sustainable peace and security in the country, will not go unpunished.

For that reason, as Head of the Government of National Reconciliation, I am instructing the Minister of Justice to proceed to call on the appropriate authorities to set up an international commission of inquiry so that those responsible for these terrible events can be speedily identified.

Furthermore, I am instructing the ministers responsible for Defence and Internal Security to promptly take all the measures necessary to put an end to any arbitrary roundups, arrests and detentions.

With immediate effect, an ad hoc committee to manage and monitor the crisis is being set up to receive all complaints from people whose lives and property have been threatened.

We must put an end to the cycle of violence and impunity in our country.

We must also work for the speedy return to normalcy of the State and its institutions, as recognized in the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, whose implementation is universally being advocated.

My dear compatriots, I do reiterate that we must all understand that only the full and comprehensive implementation of the Agreement endorsed by the international community can get our country out of this crisis.

For that to happen, however, each of the parties must demonstrate good faith in undertaking the reforms prescribed under that Agreement.

Only if we honour and sincerely carry out our commitments will all the parties be able to build the confidence which the dialogue and cooperation requires for the peace and reconciliation process to move forward.

Need we recall that the Government of National Reconciliation, together with representatives duly designated by all the signatories, has been tasked with the implementation of these reforms, which are the outcome of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement?

Should any signatory be remiss in its duty, both the implementation of the Agreement and the conduct of reforms would be jeopardized.

I am therefore inviting those parties and movements which signed the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, but which have suspended their participation in the work of the Governing Council and Council of Ministers, to return to their place.

Our common purpose in this Government is to succeed in carrying out all the reforms before the October 2005 general elections.

In that regard, much has been achieved already:

– The armed conflict is over;

– Most of the relevant legislation has been enacted by the Council of Ministers;

– The disarmament, demobilization and rehabilitation (DDR) process has begun;

– The redeployment of the Administration is taking place.

Within the shortest possible time, all this should help to reunite the country and create a climate in which goods and persons can circulate in greater security as the United Nations peacekeeping forces arrive.

What remains for us to do is to commit ourselves fully to the search for lasting and definitive solutions so that peace can be achieved.

As I speak, some of the signatories to the Peace Agreement have addressed to the President, the International Monitoring Committee and to myself, a memorandum summarizing their various concerns.

For my part, I can assure you that I am working relentlessly with all the parties concerned to build a suitable framework for dialogue so that we can find solutions acceptable to all of us.

In any case, let me recall that the ultimate objective of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement is to restore peace and to organize free, transparent, fair and open elections so that our country can return to normalcy and lasting stability.

To achieve that objective, it is absolutely imperative and unavoidable that Parliament should adopt all the legislation flowing from the Marcoussis Agreement.

In line with their commitments, the signatories to the Agreement should invite their members of Parliament to vote for the aforementioned legislation.

Furthermore, the restoration of the dialogue among the parties concerned should lead both to the speedy resumption of the DDR process as well as the reunification of the country.

Côte d'Ivoire, Africa and the international community are waiting to see us take bold, wise and responsible decisions to restore peace and revitalize our country's stagnant economy.

I would like to express my most sincere gratitude to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union, the European Union, the United Nations, friendly countries, especially France, President John Kufour, the current Chairman of ECOWAS, President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal, and all people of good will who are working with us to achieve peace.

While thanking them for their unflagging support, I would like to humbly request that they continue to assist us until dialogue is restored among my fellow Ivorians.

We still can and should overcome our differences in order to put an end to the crisis our country is going through.

We have the intellectual, human and material capacity to do so.

In our pursuit for peace, let us once again take courage and hope.

My sincere condolences go once again to our nation in its grief.

I believe that very soon Ivorians will be able to achieve reconciliation with each other because we know that the hard and the easy are two sides of the same coin.